

AO 91 (Rev. 08/09) Criminal Complaint

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Southern District of Florida

FILED BY AT D.C.

**Mar 24, 2025**

ANGELA E. NOBLE  
CLERK U.S. DIST. CT.  
S. D. OF FLA. - FTL

United States of America

v.

JAMES EDWARD WHITE

Case No. 25-MJ-6180-Valle

*Defendant(s)*

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of March 22, 2025 in the county of Broward in the  
Southern District of Florida, the defendant(s) violated:

*Code Section*  
46 U.S.C. § 70503(a)(1)

*Offense Description*  
Possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance (5 kilograms or more of cocaine)

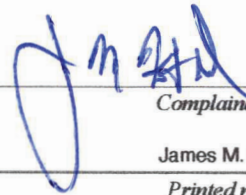
21 U.S.C. §§ 952(a) and 963

Attempt to import a controlled substance (5 kilograms or more of cocaine)

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

SEE ATTACHED AFFIDAVIT.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.



*Complainant's signature*

James M. Head, USCG

*Printed name and title*

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: March 23, 2025



*Judge's signature*

City and state: Fort Lauderdale, Florida

HON. ALICIA O. VALLE, U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

*Printed name and title*

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, Special Agent James M. Head, being first duly sworn, hereby deposes and states as follows:

**INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND**

1. I am a Special Agent (“SA”) with United States Coast Guard Investigative Service (“CGIS”) and have been so employed since 2001. I am a graduate of the Special Agent Basic Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (“FLETC”).

2. I currently serve as a Task Force Officer (“TFO”) for the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida where I am assigned to the HSI Border Enforcement Security Team (“BEST”) Maritime Smuggling Group and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (“HIDTA”) of South Florida. BEST and HIDTA is an investigative entity that is comprised of law enforcement officers from various federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies who work together in a cooperative relationship where the primary focus is on narcotics smuggling investigations. I am also responsible for investigating matters within the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Homeland Security, to include violations of the immigration and customs laws of the United States. I have conducted several investigations involving maritime smuggling involving humans, narcotics, weapons, money, violent crimes, and organized criminal enterprises. Prior to this assignment I have served as the Resident Agent in Charge of the CGIS Miami Field Office supervising investigations. I have also been assigned to HSI Savannah BEST, Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) Joint Terrorism Task Force (“JTTF”) Honolulu and FBI JTTF New York City. I have received specialized training in narcotics investigations and identification as well as the laws related to search and seizure. Additionally, I have received training and been assigned to conduct investigations of criminal violations of the United States Code as enumerated in Titles 8, 14, 18, 19, 21, 22, 31, 46 and various other federal statutes. During my tenure with these groups, I have

participated in the investigation of various criminal enterprises, to include drug trafficking organizations (“DTOs”) and human smuggling organizations (“HSOs”) involved in the acquisition, importation, transportation and distribution of controlled substances, people, weapons, and currency into and through the Southern District of Florida and other jurisdictions. My law enforcement authority is derived from Title 14, United States Code, Section 525, which grants CGIS Special Agents law enforcement authority for any crime committed within the authority of the U.S. Coast Guard (“USCG”).

3. The facts in this affidavit come from my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from other agents and witnesses. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested warrant and does not set forth all facts and information known to me and other investigators familiar with this investigation.

#### **PROBABLE CAUSE**

4. On March 22, 2025, while the USCG Station Fort Lauderdale patrol boat was conducting routine patrol they observed a thirty-six-foot Sea Ray named “BELLA VITA,” displaying Florida state registration numbers FL2997PD, entering Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale, in Broward County, Florida. The vessel was in the state of Florida waters and entered the Port Everglades channel on the north side adjacent from the Dr. Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park. At approximately 6:40 p.m., USCG entered the vessel which had one (1) person onboard, later identified as James Edward WHITE, a United States citizen. The USCG boarding team members conducted an initial safety sweep of the vessel, checking for seaworthiness, which included inspecting the bilge pump located under the floorboards. During this inspection multiple suitcases were visible in the vessel’s downstairs living spaces. WHITE related to the USCG that he was coming from the Bahamas and had drugs onboard. USCG escorted the vessel back to USCG Station Fort Lauderdale for a further dockside inspection.

5. A search of the suitcases contained individually wrapped packages of suspected contraband that field tested positive for the presence of cocaine. This inspection revealed a total of approximately two hundred and fifty-three (253) packages of suspected cocaine, with each package suspected to be an approximate kilogram bricks of cocaine.

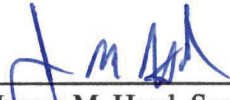
6. HSI Border Enforcement Security Task Force (“BEST”) Fort Lauderdale was notified of this event. Special Agent Caleb King, CGIS, arrived at approximately 1940 hours. Your affiant responded to USCG Station Fort Lauderdale and contacted WHITE who was secured in handcuffs and being removed from the vessel. Special Agent King identified himself to WHITE and advised WHITE of his *Miranda* Rights verbally using a *Miranda* card. WHITE said he understood his rights, waived them and agreed to answer questions. WHITE confirmed there are narcotics of an unknown type on the vessel.

7. WHITE said he was working for a known alien and narcotics smuggler (“Smuggler”) who told him he was going to pick up migrants but when he arrived at the boat, it had been loaded with narcotics. WHITE said he travelled to Nassau, Bahamas from the Nautical Marina in Broward County, in the Southern District of Florida on a different boat owned by Smuggler. WHITE picked up the BELLA VITA vessel up at Elizabeth Estates in Nassau, Bahamas. WHITE was to deliver the vessel to Smuggler at the Nautical Mariana located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. WHITE was intercepted prior to delivery.

8. Based on the information and the facts herein, your affiant submits, there is probable cause to believe that James Edward WHITE did knowingly possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance (5 kilograms or more of cocaine), while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, in violation of Title 46, United States Code, Section 70503(a)(1) and

attempt to import a controlled substance (5 kilograms or more of cocaine), in violation of Title 21,  
United States Code, Sections 952(a); and 963.

**FURTHER YOUR AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.**



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James M. Head, Special Agent  
Coast Guard Investigative Service

Subscribed and sworn to me via FACETIME  
on March 23rd 2025, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida



HON. ALICIA O. VALLE  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

**CASE NUMBER:** 25-MJ-6180-Valle

**BOND RECOMMENDATION**

DEFENDANT: JAMES EDWARD WHITE

Pre-Trial Detention

(Personal Surety) (Corporate Surety) (Cash) (Pre-Trial Detention)

By: *Camille Smith*  
AUSA: Camille C.T. Smith

Last Known Address: Naples, Florida

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What Facility: Broward Sheriff's Office

Main Jail

Agent(s): James M. Head, USCG

(FBI) (SECRET SERVICE) (DEA) (IRS) (ICE) (**OTHER**)